The public, who invest in the scheme, are expected to benefit by way of income and appreciation related to investment in housing and construction activities under the scheme.

Duty Concession on Imports of Medical and Surgical Instruments

889. SHRI SURENDRA SINGH THAKUR: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) what are the guidelines and priorities for grant of duty concession in imports;

(b) whether medical and surgical instruments have been included in the list for such duty concession;

(c) if so, what are the details of such instruments; and

(d) if the reply to part (b) above be in the negative, whether Government propose to grant duty concession for the import of medical and surgical instruments?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI AJIT PANJA): (a) Duty concessions in the case of imported goods are granted keeping in view various objectives such as economic growth, equity, protection to domestic industry, providing various public services at reasonable costs and simplicity in administration.

(b) and (c) Specified life-saving and sight-saving medical equipments are allowed to be imported duty free in terms of Notification Nos. 208-Customs dated the 22nd September, 1981 and 144-Customs dated the 27th April, 1988. A large number of specified medical and surgical equipments are allowed to be imported at concessional rate of customs duty of 40 per cent as provided in Notification No. 65-Customs dated the 1st March, 1988. Hospital equipments imported by Government controlled and other charitable hospitals are allowed to be imported duty free in terms of Notification Nos. 63 and 64-Customs dated the 1st March, 1988.

(d) Does not arise.

Trade between India and the USSR

890. SHRI SURENDRA SINGH THAKUR: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that India has an adverse balance of trade with the USSR;

(b) if so, what are the details of adverse balance of trade for the last three years;

(c) whether Government have any plan to boost up trade with the USSR to overcome adverse balance of trade; and

(d) if so, what are the details in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. R. DAS MUNSHI): (a) to (d) India is actually having a favourable balance of trade with the USSR as may be seen from the following tabular statement giving India's trade position with the USSR during the last three years:

(Rs. in crores)

Imports	Exports	Balance of trade
	1985-86	
1677.51	2005 69	(+)328 18
	1986-87 (P)	
1072.21	1872 88	( )800 67
	1987-88 (P)	
1278.67	1970 86	(+)692.19

P—Provisional figures.
Source : DGCI&S, Calcutta.

Since India's trade with the USSR is being conducted on a balanced basis, both the countries are continuously

striving to enhance and balance the trade at higher levels. A series of steps have been initiated to increase the volume of bilateral trade which include diversification and expansion of the trade basket by increasing the provisions for existing items and by adding new items, expansion of areas of mutual cooperation in such fields as railways, electronics, petroleum, Civil Aviation, etc., and encouraging new of cooperaton like joint ventures production cooperation, cooperation in services sector, etc.

Public Participation in Environmental Management

891. SHRI SURENDRA SINGH THAKUR: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have taken any steps to seek public participation in environmental management and in management of ecological balance;

(b) if so, what are the details thereof; and

(c) what steps have been taken by Government to educate the public with regard to environment and nature?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI Z. R. ANSARI): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The steps taken are (i) organisation of Eco-Development Camps for youth (ii) involvement of voluntary organisations in ecological restoration, Ganga Action Plan and Wasteland Development (iii) inclusion of non-official experts and representatives of voluntary organisations in the departmental Committees and advisory boards.

(c) Assistance is given to a number of non-governmental organisations for promoting environmental education and awareness through seminars/workshops, training programmes, essay and painting competitions, nature study tours and eco-clubs in schools and colleges. The National Museum of Natural History, New Delhi and the Centre for Environment Education, Ahmedabad assist in public education.

Rise in Export of Sea Fish and Other Marine Products

892. SHRI S. S. AHLUWALIA:
DR. YELAMANCHILI SIVAJI:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government had envisaged a major rise in export of sea fish and other marine products during the Seventh Plan period;

(b) if so, what has been the performance in 1984-85 and the details of incentives offered, if any, to enhance such exports;

(c) how does India's export performance of sea fish and other marine products compare with the target (quantity and valuewise) upto the 30th September, 1988;

(d) what have been the major bottlenecks experienced during the period in achieving higher export performance: and

(e) what steps are being taken by Government to develop the fishing industry considering the marine product exports as a thrust item?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. R. DAS MUNSHI): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) During 1984-85, export of marine products was of the order of Rs. 384 crores. Incentives being given to marine products exporters to enhance the exports include import replenishment, cash compensatory, Support and subsidy assistance for modernisation of sea food processing industry.

(c) Export performance of marine products for the current financial year